

Great War Bulletin

No. 64...Newark...Monday 18 October 1915

Becher the hero wounded!



Nurse Cavell's execution shines spotlight on prisoners of war

ONLY 24 hours after Nurse Edith Louisa Cavell was executed by a German firing squad, a Newark prisoner of war got a letter home for the first time since last Christmas Eve.

The heroine Nurse Cavell, a vicar's daughter born in a small Norfolk village in December 1865, was condemned for helping British prisoners of war escape into neutral Holland. In truth, she had nursed wounded German soldiers alongside British, French and men of other nationalities.

She was roundly criticised by many for assisting German and Austrian enemies of the British. But she soon began to work with others to smuggle the Allied soldiers that she was caring for, out of the hospital and into Holland in the hope that they could find their way back home.

After a lengthy investigation, the suspicions of German officials grew and Edith was arrested. Fully aware of the implications of being involved with the underground, she kept it a secret from many of her nurses.

When interrogated, Edith provided all of the details surrounding the underground and was sent to trial with 35 others. Most were sentenced to hard labour. Despite international pressure for mercy, she was shot by

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THE FIRST hint arrived on Saturday that the local men in the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters had a torrid time taking the Hohenzollern Redoubt last week.

Mrs Becher received a telegram informing her that her husband, Major Becher DSO, was seriously ill.

His thigh had been shattered early in the Sherwoods' charge. He had to lie for hours within 30 yards of the German trenches for most of the fiercely fought day.

Under cover of darkness, he managed to slither into the cover of a trench and was discovered hours later by a man of the RAMC.

Now Mrs Becher faces days, maybe weeks, of worry awaiting further news.

And soon she will discover that her two brothers were killed in the same attack...

It will eventually be revealed that they lost 49 officers and men killed. To put these sacrifices in perspective, the rest of the 139th North Midland Brigade of the 46th Division had 63 men killed during this action.

CHILLING LETTER HOME...

'Docs took a piece of bone off my brain

IMAGINE getting this letter with your breakfast...

"I have been under one operation, when the doctors had to take a piece of bone off my brain," wrote 26-year-old Private George Henry Kirkby of the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters to his parents, Sarah Elizabeth and insurance agent Frank at 66 Cross Street, Newark. "And the operation was a success!"

George, an iron turner in an engineering works pre-war, explained that he was in No.3 Canadian General Hospital, Carniers, after being "laid low" by German shrapnel. "I have had the best medical skill Canada can produce. I don't expect I shall be long before I am in England. You may rest assured that I am being well looked after and am in good hands."

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a German firing squad. Her execution last Tuesday received worldwide condemnation.

But Edith, who had become a nurse at the Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel in the East End of London, remained incredibly sanguine about her cruel fate, saying:

"I have seen death so often that it is not strange or fearful to me. This I would say, standing as I do in view of God and eternity I realise that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone."

By amazing coincidence on the following day, with national newspapers blazing news of Edith's fate, a letter arrived from one of the first Newark soldiers to be taken prisoner, Fred Tacey.

He wrote to his parents at 102 Northgate: "Thank you very much indeed for the parcel with the cigarettes in. It was all right and I enjoyed them very much.

"We are away from headquarters now, harvesting, and ten of us are billeted at a manor farm.

"We are having a splendid time, plenty of food, and a little money; but we cannot get on owing to the weather.

"I also had a letter from Miss Dench. Give my kind regards to her as I cannot write two letters..."

His family and neighbours suspect that perhaps Fred had received a little help with the letter. Captured after being shot in both thighs during the 1914 Battle of Mons, he was not renowned for using a word like "splendid" before he went to War.

[A century on, it is hard to identify the "Miss Dench" to whom Fred referred. But she might have been postman's daughter Ethel, born in 1907 and living at 13 Tolney Lane: children were encouraged by their teachers to cheer-up wounded men.]

Meanwhile, parcels have been despatched by Mrs Edith Pink on behalf of the Lady Mayoress's Fund for Prisoners of War to Privates Key and Pownall (1st Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment) and Privates Davison, Green and Winfield (2nd Battalion Sherwood Foresters).

In addition, the three children of Mrs Norah Platt at Barnby Manor, have adopted Private Holloway (2nd Battalion Sherwood Foresters) and are planning to send him a box once a fortnight. It was another example of youngsters being involved in the volunteer spirit that was so important to Britain's War Effort: Mrs Platt (born Roxburghshire in Scotland 1875) had been married for only 14 years.

Two Winthorpe ladies have adopted Private Pownall, so he will also receive regular sustenance for the duration of his incarceration.

But as the years go by and the quantity of prisoners of war increases, the work of Mrs Pink and her willing helpers will make her, to all intents and purposes, as much of a heroine as the late Nurse Edith Cavell.

BAD NEWS FOR THE WAR SHIRKERS

THE SHIRKERS of Newark – and everywhere else, for that matter – were given notice on Saturday that they could soon be forced into Armed Service.

Lord Derby, appointed Director-General of Recruiting five days ago, announced a programme for raising the numbers of entrants into the Army.

Men aged 18 to 40 can continue to enlist voluntarily or attest with an obligation to come if called up later on.

But the War Office notified the public that voluntary enlistment will soon cease and that the last day of registration will be 15 December.

Fulbeck farmer loses second son to the War

COLLINGHAM'S former carrier, Henry Hutchinson, now 63 and farming at Fulbeck, discovered last week that he has lost a second son in this War.

Edward, 31, was killed in the Battle of Festubert last 26 October, leaving his wife of eight years Emma and daughters Evelyn, 7, and Millicent, 4.

Now Henry has received a letter telling him Ralph, 35, a Private in the 2nd Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment, died this 25 September – after being so badly wounded at Kemmel on 19 February that he was sent to England to recuperate. Exactly when he returned to action is not known.

A comrade of Ralph's, 17-year-old Private William Cobb of 14 Victoria Gardens, Newark, is in Wharnccliffe Hospital, Sheffield, with a gunshot wound in the leg. There is no indication of how he persuaded the authorities he was old enough for combat.

Private 8692 Edward Hutchinson of the 2nd Battalion Manchester Regiment is remembered on Le Touret Memorial. Private 9214 Ralph Hutchinson lies in the White City Cemetery in Bois-Grenier, a village close to Armentieres.

Warriner boys in the wars: prisoner and wounded

JOSEPH WARRINER, 66, sits at home in 3 Norfolk Buildings, Parker Street, Newark, pondering which of his sons is the better off.

William, a 38-year-old father of four, is a prisoner of war in Germany and writes home from time to time complaining of the hardships.

Samuel, a Lance Corporal in the Somerset Light Infantry, was wounded first at La Bassee and later at Ypres – and has returned to action hoping for a real case of 'third time lucky'.

If only he knew what we now a century later: they will both survive the War.

'Das' dazzles in a football match close to battlefront

NEWS reached the *Newark Advertiser* in time for last Wednesday's edition that a footballer from the James Simpson's factory XI, 'Das' Bentley scored a goal in a match between scratch teams of Army players just behind the Front line.

'Das' was one of four members of the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters to figure in the winning team.

The serious news in the letter is that the 8th are now attached to a Canadian Division ... leading some to wonder why; what's happened to the Brits to whom they were previously attached? Worrying times! And there will be more worries when 'Das', son of Mr & Mrs Edward Bentley, Sleaford Road, is dangerously wounded in July 1917.

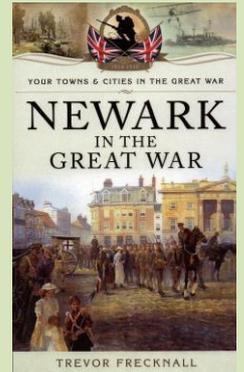
Bazaar boosts local Congregationalists

LOMBARD STREET Congregational Church's annual three-day bazaar raised £112 14s 8d last week to place the current finances in a satisfactory condition, clean and redecorate the church, and ensure that the witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be efficiently maintained.

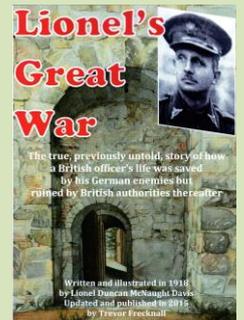
School helps disabled, blind battlers

Children of Barnby Road School get a special "thank you" from the Mayoress for raising £10 for disabled and blind sailors and soldiers.

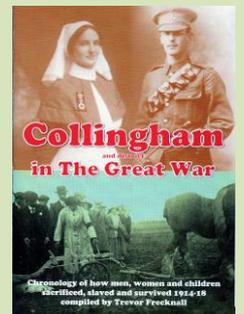
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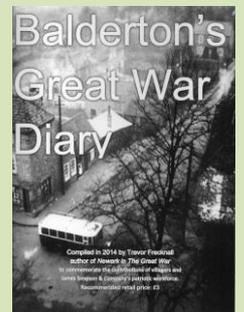
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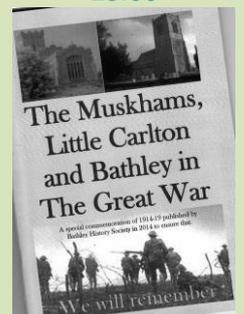
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